



It started with sibling support

Nelson Reason – Senior Disability Support Worker

My journey with Mpower began long before I worked here, I have two younger brothers, Seth and Zane who both have an intellectual disability and autism.

Growing up, I was always really close with them. Watching them grow up and seeing the different supports they needed over the years really grew my passion for working with people with a disability, people like my brothers.

They had been accessing Mpower's services since they were very young, particularly those in Early Intervention.

Louise Jellie, who is now my Executive Manager, used to be their speech therapist and Penny Ryan, who was their support worker, is still a valued colleague today. My brothers used Mpower services for years, and from that, I became part of the sibling support group about 10-12 years ago. We used to go to Geelong or Colac for day trips once a month with a group of people who were all in similar situations to me by having siblings with disabilities. The siblings group was pretty cool and I met some great people.

After school, I started working where most kids do, at Maccas, and then started working as a butcher. While I was there, I did my Cert IV in Disability and thought, 'I need to get out of this line of work and do what I love', so I applied for a few jobs and got some calls to interviews. There was a need for support workers everywhere. One of the reasons I had applied to work with Mpower was because I was familiar with their services and workers and I knew it would be a great place to work.

I started with Mpower four years ago, when I was 21. There were plenty of shifts, as the need for Disability Support Workers had grown in the region.

I was able to jump straight into work and I was pretty lucky with my first fortnight. I started at the perfect time of year and was put straight into the school holiday program. Back then, we worked with a large group of kids across a range of ages which gave me a massive insight into all types of disabilities. It also gave me the opportunity to work with a great group of experienced support workers to watch and learn from.

My work as a support worker has evolved over time, working 1:1 with clients, residential care and doing groups sessions with both kids and adults.

Over the past couple of years I have been working as the Key Worker to one particular person who lives with us at Mpower. I am responsible for her medication, dietary needs and making sure her social and educational goals are worked towards. This includes training new support workers to support this person as well.

Most recently, I have taken on a role as a Senior Support Worker. I am still finding my feet in this role but love the work I have done so far, including setting up new programs and organising activities. I am ready for this new challenge and believe my great insights, having worked on the floor and knowing what the kids like, has really helped me.

So far, I have lots of great memories. My fondest moment, the one I hold closest, was about three years ago working with a participant. Mum wanted him to get a job so that he could work towards some independence, ready for potentially leaving home the following year to go to university. We sat down and discussed job opportunities, how we could work towards trying to organise university and setting himself up on his own. Both mum and the participant wanted to work towards the same goal, but they just didn't know how to get there.

Initially, we sat down and wrote up a resume. During our next time together, we walked around and handed them out. Within a week, he had received five phone calls for interviews, at which point he started to panic a little about the interview process. We focussed hard on preparing, practiced some questions and wrote down some key points. From those five interviews, he got three job offers and after some discussion about where he could get the best training and support to get him 'real world ready', he chose his role. He worked there successfully for one year before moving out of home and going to university. He is now in his second year of study and going really well. This is just one example of the fantastic supports we can offer the people we work with.



"I love Mpower as an organisation, and like I mentioned, seeing the great outcomes we can get with valuable 1:1 supports makes for a very rewarding career."